"Millennials are a generation that has fallen into the trap of constant self-development"

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I was pissed off by other drivers on the street, taxes and friends. He also pissed off the new boss. We could call ourselves a few times a month. But most of all, I was angry with myself that I was always afraid of something. Fear has accompanied me constantly," says Adam, a 34-year-old millennial who suffers from depression and anxiety disorders.

Born in the 80's and early 90's, they grew up in a culture of individualism. Millennials. Maria Organ in the new cycle Weekend.gazeta.pl looks at Generation Y, often called the generation "I, me, me".

Agata, 32 years old, depression, anxiety disorders, burnout

Agata believes that depression just happened to her like other flu or cancer. – *I objectively had no problem* – says the 32-year-old. – *I was earning money that allowed me to keep myself in a big city. In our country it's a privilege, I couldn't complain.*

She doesn't know when she got sick. But for as long as he can remember, he likes to give his all. In middle school, he still wants more, better, more. In high school, he dreams of professional writing. However, in the five-thousand-year-old town in Podkarpacie, journalism studies are considered a simple path to a career at McDonald's. So Agata chooses Polish studies to have teacher papers if anything. He's not doing his studies. *- I've been kidnapped by work. I came across an announcement with the mythical name "copywriter" in the title. I thought it was always a start. It turned out that this start was 20 vacuum cleaners and 20 kettles to be described per day, they differed only in color* – he says.

The first boss tells Agata that if you get into the trade, you won't get out. She's right. Agata is soon getting promoted, she no longer describes products, she's just starting to deal with their purchase. – *Ten years, three employers, but I'm not in this industry for punishment. I really like what I do. I could work 14 hours a day because it was burning. At the same time, I realized that this was not entirely normal.*

Pandemic, Agata is losing her job. After the first lockdown is completed, she finds a new one, but she gets powerful fatigue. After all, he has the right to do so. The company is based on a different end *of* the city than the apartment that Agata has been sharing with a friend for years. – *I got up before 6:00 to get to work at 9.00. Three transfers and I was there. I finished at 17.00. The return lasted another two hours, sometimes three, because still shopping. I was at home around 20.00. I cooked, I ate, I washed and I was found north. I thought it was natural that I had to sleep it off this weekend. Until Monday, I was just lying there sleeping.*

After a year of living in this mode, Agata has had enough. He finds a studio apartment near work. He decides to move, also because of his partner. – *We met at work, because elsewhere. Everything was wonderful: I had a new apartment, a new guy, a good job. There was no reason to lie in bed and howl all afternoon. And yet I was lying in bed, breaking out and I couldn't tell you what the reason for crying was. If I had to go to work, I was going. But if you should have done something else, like wash, I didn't. Making any movement was a terrible effort. The worst torment I've ever been through*, he says.

She goes to the therapist after a few months with the hope that she will not need a psychiatrist. He finds one that seems perfect. He's got schools, certificates. Agata withstands four meetings. – *I am a child of the 90's, then you did not hear about therapists, and psychiatrists were for crazy people. As you started making visuals for me like, "Imagine you're sitting on a ship, and tell me who's going with you," I thought, "let's not do this to each other." I thought a doctor would be better for my strict mind.*

He goes to the psychiatrist, hoping that maybe it's a sick thyroid or another condition that affects the mood. The doctor's 20 minutes late. When Agata tries to enter the office, she gets a reprimand. She's supposed to wait for her to be invited. *"I was stressed and she was rough." But when she asked me if I had a constant feeling of guilt, I burst into tears like a child. It was the first time someone knew what I meant, without my translations. Before she made the diagnosis, she referred me for detailed examinations. It turned out that I do not have a diseased thyroid, but depression. We had to get to burnout longer. She acknowledged that work has too much effect on my whole life, but I'm still not sure I agree with this diagnosis.*

> Why did I feel guilty? All the evil of this world. I had no objective reasons, and yet I felt that way.

I like to work a lot, I consider myself a very good employee. I know what my competence is, how much I bring to the workplace, so I don't think I'm blaming myself for anything specific. Yes, I had a period when I worked a lot, but I grew out of it. We don't save people in trade.

I was also diagnosed with anxiety disorders. Maybe because I'm constantly analyzing everything. I usually connect the dots meticulously and have to have an answer to everything. And this time, I did it differently. I took the attitude that a psychiatrist is a doctor, and depression is a disease. There is no answer to the question of why someone has cancer, so I assumed that it was similar here. So far, I don't know why all this has happened to me.

Agata doesn't tell her parents about depression, she doesn't want to worry them. Two of her closest friends and a partner know. – *I had the support of* a *friend. However bad it sounds, we are still from a generation in which you do not talk about such topics. This support was such that I knew she was here and if it was necessary, it would always help. My boyfriend knew, but he never asked how I felt.*

The medication helps. Agata does not feel the improvement immediately, but at some point she realizes that *she* is alive again. – *Day after day*, *I laboriously explained to myself that a moment must be the way it is before it gets better. I knew I was taking my medication, so it must be better. And it was. I started to leave the house again, read books, listen to music. Because in depression, I stopped doing all this, I didn't have the strength.*

Agata barely stabilized, her life began to fall apart. – *At work, the struggle began, I was stressed 24 hours a day. After my birthday, my partner said he was leaving. I was afraid of relapse because I was spending time again, lying on the couch and crying. At the same time, I felt that this time it was experiencing emotions, not a repeat of entertainment. After a month, I recovered.*

Then Agata says goodbye to her employer, packs her suitcases and goes to the family home. – *I've been on such a terrible feeling that someone from work will call me. It wasn't until two months later that things got better. I didn't go back to psychotherapy, but I'm thinking about it. I certainly won't do that on unemployment. Even if there is no objective problem, as in my case, it can be a good tool for development if you come across the right person. Now I live peacefully and slowly look for a job.*

Dr. hab. n. med. Sławomir Murawiec, psychiatrist and psychotherapist

Many patients, when applying for their first visit, stipulate that they do not see the reason why she suffers from depression. If they define the cause of depression as something very specific, for example, a single difficult event, then in fact it can often be said that such an event did not occur or at first glance does not seem traumatic. However, if we consider as the basis of the symptoms of depression a kind of set of thoughts and expectations from each other and the world inscribed in the mental structure of a person, then the reason is.

For the millennial generation, a kind of depression is characteristic, which can be described as a process of mourning the notions about themselves and their future. If such a person asks about the specific losses he is experiencing, he will say that there was no dramatic loss. And objectively it will be, because she has not lost her job, money or relationship, and if she has failed, they are not final. However, once we get to the point that it is about internal losses, the matter is completely different.

Most often, these are losses associated with imagination. Because behind our behavior there is always some kind of leading thought, imagination or fantasy about one's own subject. These can be fantasies about achieving spectacular success before thirty, being the best at work, getting giant money and fame, or creating the perfect relationship. Based on those notions that patients are not always aware of, many of them build huge expectations of themselves. If they don't implement them in the short term, then objectively, nothing happens. But in terms of subjective living, this can be felt as a loss of a lifetime.

> A person who works very intensively, I would ask about her idea. If her sense of value is built on the image of 'always gives her best and only success counts' - that is, I do not have a limit of this giving, because I prove my value by working well - then at a later stage there will be a natural weakening of the possibility of action.

Because overwork leads to a decrease in fitness, cognitive function and concentration. One person will then say that this fatigue, and her mental structure will be intact. However, in a person whose sense of value is based on constantly giving everything, the mental structure will begin to collapse. Because it loses the foundation on which all the sense of value was based. For such a person, a decrease in performance will not mean that she is tired, but will mean that she is useless. Then there may be depression. Drugs can help stabilize the condition of such a patient, but they will not change his psychological situation.

Adam, 34, depression, anxiety disorder

Adam doesn't remember exactly how he felt before treatment because he's been healing for nine years. *"I certainly wasn't the one I read about on the internet." One that is completely unable to function. I thought there were people who had bigger problems.*

He remembers the first grade of elementary school where he was "the new one." A gymnasium where his peers gave him a breather, but all the lessons bored him to the point where he was constantly doing something to keep his attention. By the way, taking the attention of the whole class and teachers. He remembers a high school where he completely stopped studying and was threatened with several subjects. He didn't even make the adjustments, he just dropped out of school.

I already had a sneak peek for computer science. The principal asked me and my colleagues to do a "virtual walk" for our school. Back then, it was a lot harder than it is now. He promised that in return they would let us out of biology to the next class. He didn't keep his word, and I guess that's why I blew the rest.

What about the parents? – *The father is* a *teacher. For the sake of peace, I went to a part-time high school. But instead of going to class, I was going somewhere for the day to catch my breath. Those were moments of relief from pressure. I also liked how my parents argued, because back then their attention was not directed at me. For a moment, no one was picking on me. I know it was out of concern, but I felt like I was about to get killed by this care. I was getting mad. I felt like I could only run away or do something to myself. When I said I was moving out, they laughed at me. The next day, I was gone.*

In Wrocław, Adam is getting caught up in the IT industry. He's self-taught, but he's quick to find a job. He gets bored with it just as quickly, preferably all day long he would sleep. Coaxed by his partner at the time, he goes to a psychiatrist. – *I constantly exploded with anger, I could not cope with myself. My work was very exhausting, but I didn't take any steps to change it. I went to see a psychiatrist. I got the medication, but they didn't help.*

Adam has less and less strength every day, life hurts him. So much so that he tries to interrupt them. *"I've had some attempts to log out of the system." One came my parents and took me home. After another one, I panicked and reported to the hospital myself, looking for any rescue. The nurse says, "You'll lie down here, someone's coming." If after 40 minutes no one showed up, I dragged myself back into the apartment. Later, I was no longer seeking help through the NFZ, but privately.*

For several years, he is treated only psychiatrically. From tenure, he switches to freelance. In worse moments, when he does not have the strength to get out of bed, he is kept by his partner. When looking for help, he decides to have cognitive behavioral therapy. – *For some time I was convinced that thanks* to *this therapy I managed and I do not care so much anymore. But later it turned out that I had dealt with only one particular situation. And yet I care very much. What? People. What they think of me.*

Moments of sinking in a sense of hopelessness are intertwined with moments of seeking help. Psychiatrists, diagnoses and medications change. And Adam is getting more and more angry. – *I was annoyed by other drivers on the street, taxes and friends. He also annoyed the new boss, because after five years I decided to come back to full-time. What? The fact that he screwed everything up and didn't let me do anything my way. We could call ourselves a few times a month. The whole world pissed me off, literally everything! But most of all, I was angry with myself that I was always afraid of something. Fear has accompanied me continually.*

Adam desperately seeks help and finally finds. She goes to therapy in a narrative trend that seems to help. He also receives another diagnosis: ADHD. On the one hand, he feels relieved, because all puzzles are made up of one whole. On the other hand, for a year she can't get over it. – *In therapy, I grind what's going on in my head. We meet every three weeks, every month. The therapist extends the breaks. He says I have more time to digest the treadmill, and I don't use therapy to regulate emotions. In fact, often I can solve many problems without her help and at the next meeting I do not remember about them anymore, because new ones appeared.*

Adam also decides to do business coaching. Then his psychiatrist says, "But why are you going there when you know what to do?" *"I couldn't stand that in the company I worked for, people were buying a new Porsche for one bonus, and I was a private employee of everything." I want to see what it's like to be disgustingly rich, and I thought I needed a consultation for that. Turns out the psychiatrist was right. I have knowledge, I'm just afraid to use it. And I went coaching because I needed to talk to someone. It also occurred to me that even though I'm in a long-term relationship, I feel bloody lonely.*

Adam believes the treatment saved his life. He is much more emotionally stable, he sorted out a lot of things, his relationship with his father has improved. *Thanks to my therapy, he understood a lot, he could apologize to me. Mom will never change. And I learned how my psyche works, at what point it collapses. That's why I quit my job at the last company, the constant comparison was destroying me. I work on my own, I've found*

people who do better than I can get customers and advertise. But still few things please me. It still happens that I really want to do something, but I don't have the strength. I'm trying to find her. My partner and I recently opened a coffee shop. During the opening, I noticed how sensitive I was to the stimuli. I realized that when I'm nervous, it's not really anger, it's just me reacting to pain.

Dr. hab. n. med. Sławomir Murawiec, psychiatrist and psychotherapist

The type of depression often found in millennials well reflects the phrase "all or nothing." Such people limp at the stage of notions about themselves and take the attitude that if they can not be exactly like in their fantasies, then everything else loses its meaning. There are also people who have declared very early in their lives that they are not interested in success. This often means that at an early stage, they thought that they were not good enough to achieve success. And the very definition of success is buried under many layers and today it is not very clear what this success would mean for them. Such an attitude is characterized, on the one hand, by a dramatic sense of loss of self-worth, a sense of being nothing and finding yourself at the bottom. And on the other hand, a rebellion and a sense of resentment to the world that you have been treated so unfairly.

A person suffering from depression often falls into a certain characteristic state. She stops being active, she loses motivation to achieve anything, she begins to have thoughts of hurting herself. Why? Why? Because she decided that since she had failed to make her own ideas come true, there was no point in doing anything. It's a decision that often comes at a very early stage of life, and its consequences last for years. These patients continue to identify with the previous, imagined self-imagine. In their mental world, they remain individuals who continue to pursue unrealistically high goals. And the idea they can't give up because it's so strong and emotionally important are themselves and their future, in which they're spectacularly successful.

At the same time, there is a process of cruel self-depressing. It's kind of a fury against myself that comes from the belief that if I haven't achieved success, I have to punish myself. Success is the most important thing for me, but I don’t take any steps to achieve it, or I think I’m incapable of it, so I have to put it on myself and fall even lower. A person suffering from depression does this by taking actions that lead to the destruction of themselves and their future. A common example is taking work well below your capabilities, which confirms her low sense of value.

> The millennials are a generation that has fallen into the trap of constant self-development. Often they do not consciously set themselves the goal of achieving perfection and strive for this purpose even at the expense of their own health.

Their approach is dominated by zero-one thinking: if I can't be the best at something, then the world is not worth getting out of bed. Millennials are not taught that being ordinary is fine. Meanwhile, the recognition that there are people who in some field are better and worse than us takes a lot of tension off. Setting up to target the middle brings relief. Because if I succeed, I'm happy. And if I don't make it, I just didn't make it and it's hard, life doesn't end.